

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PANAMA 06320 312153Z

ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SPTA-02 HA-05 TRSE-00 CIAE-00

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SUBJECT: ATTORNEY GENERAL REPORTS ON UNIVERSITY
VIOLENCE

REFERENCE: PANAMA 5292

SUMMARY: EXCERPTS FROM THE ATTORNEY GENERAL'S REPORT
ON THE JUNE 14 UNIVERSITY VIOLENCE WERE CARRIED IN
THE PRESS OF AUGUST 30 - 31. THREE STUDENTS ARE BEING
HELD IN PREVENTIVE DETENTION IN CONNECTION WITH THE
INCIDENT, AND ORDERS ARE OUT FOR PREVENTIVE DETENTION
OF THREE MORE, ONE OF WHOM ALLEGEDLY IS IN CUBA. IN
RECENT WEEKS, SEVERAL STUDENT PROTESTS HAVE TAKEN PLACE
DEMANDING INFORMATION ON THE ATTORNEY GENERAL'S
INVESTIGATION OF THE INCIDENT. THE FATHER OF ONE
OF THE STUDENTS KILLED IN THE VIOLENCE HAS WRITTEN
TO THE INTER-AMERICAN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION ABOUT
THE SITUATION. END SUMMARY.

1. THE MEDIA OF AUGUST 30 - 31 REPORTED ON THE
ATTORNEY GENERAL'S INVESTIGATION OF THE JUNE 14
OUTBREAK OF VIOLENCE AMONG RIVAL STUDENT GROUPS
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF PANAMA (UP) WHICH RESULTED
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PAGE 02 PANAMA 06320 312153Z

IN THE DEATHS OF TWO STUDENTS. LENGTHY EXCERPTS
OF THE 1,023-PAGE INVESTIGATION REPORT WERE CARRIED
IN "LA ESTRELLA" OF AUGUST 31. ACCORDING TO THE
REPORT, THREE STUDENTS ARE BEING HELD IN PREVENTIVE
DETENTION IN CONNECTION WITH THE INCIDENT, AND THE
DETENTION OF THREE OTHERS, ONE OF WHOM ALLEGEDLY IS
IN CUBA, HAS BEEN ORDERED. THE CRIMES COMMITTED

IN THE INCIDENT ARE DESCRIBED AS HOMICIDE, ARSON, PERSONAL INJURY, DAMAGE TO PROPERTY, AND DISCHARGING FIREARMS IN A POPULATED AREA. PHYSICAL DAMAGE TO THE UNIVERSITY WAS SET AT DOLS. 24,010.

2. INFORMATION AVAILABLE TO DATE DOES NOT POSITIVELY IDENTIFY EACH OF THE SIX STUDENTS AS TO THEIR AFFILIATION WITH THE RIVAL STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS INVOLVED IN THE JUNE 14 VIOLENCE. HOWEVER, TWO OF THEM APPEAR TO BE MEMBERS OF FEP (THE GOVERNMENT-INFLUENCED FEDERATION OF PANAMANIAN STUDENTS), AND AT LEAST ONE, AND POSSIBLY A SECOND, MEMBERS OF THE RIVAL ANTI-GOVERNMENT FER (REVOLUTIONARY STUDENT FRONT).

(NOTE: THE TWO STUDENTS KILLED IN THE INCIDENT WERE FROM OPPOSING GROUPS, ONE FROM THE UNIVERSITY ANTI-IMPERIALIST FRONT, FAU, WHICH IS AFFILIATED WITH THE PANAMANIAN COMMUNIST PARTY, AND THE OTHER FROM THE FER.)

3. IN RELATED DEVELOPMENTS, SEVERAL SMALL STUDENT DEMONSTRATIONS HAVE TAKEN PLACE RECENTLY AT THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE AND OTHER SECONDARY SCHOOLS, IN THE FORM OF HUNGER STRIKES AND SIT-INS AT THE DIRECTORS' OFFICES, DEMANDING EXPLANATIONS FROM THE EDUCATION MINISTRY AND THE ATTORNEY GENERAL ON THE INVESTIGATION OF THE CLASH AT THE UP. AT THE UP ITSELF, FIVE STUDENTS WERE INVOLVED BRIEFLY IN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 PANAMA 06320 312153Z

A HUNGER STRIKE IN EARLY AUGUST, IN PROTEST OF NEW REGULATIONS GOVERNING STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS AND ACTIVITIES AIMED AT PREVENTING FUTURE OUTBREAKS OF VIOLENCE. TWO OF THEM WERE SUSPENDED FOR A SEMESTER. ASIDE FROM THESE EVENTS, THE STUDENT SCENE HAS BEEN PRETTY QUIET.

4. THERE IS ONE OTHER PERSON WHO SEEMS DETERMINED TO SEE THAT THE TWO STUDENT DEATHS ARE NOT FORGOTTEN -- THE FATHER, ALFORD H. CAMACHO, OF ONE OF THE VICTIMS. HE HAS WRITTEN TO THE INTER-AMERICAN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION PROVIDING INFORMATION ON THE INCIDENT, ACCUSING THE EDUCATION MINISTER AND UP RECTOR OF IMPLICATION IN THE DEATHS "THROUGH COMMISSION AND OMISSION," AND REQUESTING AN INVESTIGATION. DIKEOS

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